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What You See

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What You See · *William Stafford*

You see The Great at The Kennedy Center
lifting a purple curtain to stride forth
on a wide stage. You see The Other Great
applauding. You see faces moved by the sight,
and you see The Nation watching, worshiping.

You are numbed by successive glimpses,
Leaders, Performers, Critics, congratulating
each other: They know excellence when They see it.
And around it all, you hear this other pulsing:
you hear under the stage the silent earth
and overhead a burst of the great silence.